United Nations

# Centre against Apartheid

Notes and Documents

6/90 May 1990

## SPECIAL COMMITTEE AGAINST APARTHEID HOLDS SPECIAL MEETING TO MARK THE RELEASE OF NELSON MANDELA

[Note: This issue contains excerpts from statements made at the special meeting of the Special Committee against Apartheid, convened on 16 February 1990, to mark the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela after 27 years of imprisonment.]

90-13605

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Statement by H.E. Professor Ibrahim Agboola Gambari (Nigeria), Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid

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In the annals of recent history few men have stood as tall and as erect as Nelson Mandela, a man who fulfilled the essence of being human; a man who, after more than a quarter of century in prison, refused to bend his beliefs or to alter his aspirations; a man who personifies the yearnings of the people of South Africa for freedom, equality and justice, and the yearnings of men and women around the world for dignity and attainment of higher values.

He came out of prison, where he was unjustly incarcerated for 27 long years, with humility and generosity of spirit. He did not talk about revenge, he talked about reconciliation; he did not talk about fear, he talked about hope. The world was moved and stunned before his solemn and majestic comportment which characterized the years of the long confinement and the days of the new restrained freedom. He came out in a country which is still not free; in a country where the colour of the skin limits opportunities and humiliates those who happen to be born black. And yet he came out in a country where the first rays of hope are breaking the dark horizon and where the dawn of a new era is approaching.

Mr. Mandela, in joining his colleagues and his compatriots in the struggle for a new South Africa, will undoubtedly play a leading role. His country and the world were deprived too long of his active leadership. So much was wasted of his life, so much blood was shed of his compatriots, so much suffering was borne by innocent people, so many minds and talents went to rot. Often, for the tree of freedom to grow, blood and sacrifice are needed. In South Africa, the sacrifice has gone on for too long. This is why we all today heave a sigh of relief, we all feel that the moment of vindication is near.

The Special Committee salutes Nelson Mandela, this gallant, wise and courageous man who has become an international symbol of resistance to oppression and injustice. By his uncompromising dedication to his ideals, he has had a most profound influence on events in his country and we are certain that he will, within his organization, within the anti-apartheid forces of his country, be a shepherd to lead his country to freedom - for all his countrymen, black and white - and his country to democracy and international respect.

The Special Committee acknowledges the encouraging steps taken by Mr. de Klerk and urges him to implement promptly the remaining measures required for the creation of a climate conducive to negotiations. The unbanning of the organizations and the release of Nelson Mandela and some other political prisoners have been steps in the right direction. These steps should continue. All political prisoners should be released; those in exile should be able to return to their homes. The state of emergency should be lifted; the troops should be removed from the townships; and repressive legislation, such as the Internal Security Act, should be repealed. These are the remaining measures that Pretoria should implement promptly to usher the country into genuine negotiations leading to a new constitution inspired by

the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Two months ago the General Assembly adopted a Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences for Southern Africa. The Declaration reflects the world's advice and provides international support to the South African people in their challenge to build a united, non-racial and democratic country.

This Declaration constitutes a moral and political contract that binds the international community to assist the South African people to build a new South Africa. This unprecedented document, unprecedented because it was adopted by a consensus and because it formulated the framework for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in South Africa, also binds the Member States to step up all-round support for the opponents of apartheid, to use concerted and effective measures aimed at applying pressure to ensure a speedy end to apartheid. It also includes an important commitment of the international community not to relax existing measures "until there is clear indication of profound and irreversible changes, bearing in mind the objectives of the Declaration".

This last point should be emphasized. Governments, in addition to their own assessment about the profoundness of changes, have to respect the objective criteria that emanate from the substance of the Declaration and to which they themselves have agreed. In this context, the Special Committee regrets the recent announcements by the British Government of its unilateral relaxation of a number of hitherto imposed measures, namely the lifting of the cultural and academic boycott, the discontinuation of the policy of discouraging new investment in South Africa, as well as tourism to that country. While the Special Committee acknowledges the need for encouraging the ongoing process towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict, it deems entirely premature any form of relaxation of existing measures.

At this stage, we are at the beginning of the process. For this process to succeed, the pressures on the authorities of South Africa must not be relaxed. Mr. Mandela himself was clear on this point. He, along with all the democratic forces in the country, needs the support of the international community in this monumental task. The time will come for rewards. Now is the time for encouraging the process and maintaining a concerted pressure. The road ahead of us is promising but still fraught with dangers.

Our joy today should not retract from our vigilance. Nelson Mandela, whose release from prison we celebrate today, will demand no less of us. We owe it to the South African people, we owe it to the countless victims of apartheid, we owe it to our conscience, and to the world.

Statement by H.E. Major-General Joseph N. Garba (Nigeria), President of the General Assembly

I cannot say how delighted I am to join the Special Committee against Apartheid at this special meeting to mark the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela from apartheid prisons.

For many years, the United Nations, its Member States and all people of good faith were tireless in their campaign for the release of Mr. Mandela. On 11 February, our collective efforts yielded dividend. I believe it is remarkable and, indeed, gratifying, that what we have all so assiduously worked for has, in the end, materialized.

While paying tribute to anti-apartheid crusaders all over the world, and particularly to your Committee, I believe it is proper to acknowledge the courage of Mr. de Klerk and his efforts so far to fulfil the promises he made when he was a candidate for the President of South Africa.

While it is natural to be euphoric about Mr. Mandela's release, I am most mindful, and I believe others are too, that Mr. Mandela's release, as important and crucial as it is to the eradication of apartheid, is just a part of a larger process of ending apartheid peacefully. There are, and there still remain, greater issues and matters of substance that have to be addressed before we can meaningfully accept that South Africa is irreversibly moving towards a non-racial and democratic society.

When the General Assembly met at its sixteenth special session, in December 1989, I had said, at the opening of that session, that in convening the special session, the "international community is offering its hand in partnership to the authorities in Pretoria and to all South African people in order to start a positive process of change". It is, indeed, most gratifying that whereas the South African Government did not participate in that special session, they have found it fitting and proper to respond constructively and progressively to the demands made by the General Assembly in the very remarkable consensus Declaration.

I am mindful of the challenge ahead, and that a lot remains to be accomplished in order for the South African Government to fully meet the demands spelt out in the Declaration. We remain optimistic that, in spite of the pressure and obvious challenges from the extreme right in South Africa, Mr. de Klerk will remain consistent in meeting the demands of the General Assembly.

As we mark this occasion, I am convinced that Mr. Mandela, working as a free man and with his characteristic diligence, constitutes a prominent ally and facilitator to Mr. de Klerk's adminsitration and all well-meaning people in finding a durable solution to apartheid.

While we welcome him back to the warm embrace of his people and into the fold of the international community, I hasten to add that his freedom, which we all cherish dearly, should not, under any circumstance, be used as a pretext for lifting of sanctions currently in place against South Africa. It would be most ill-advised and, indeed, counter-productive for any States Members of the United Nations to contemplate the lifting of sanctions against South Africa now.

There are yet many challenges ahead. We must be fully supportive of all efforts to assist the South African people in attaining their desired objective of a non-racial and democratic country through a negotiation

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settlement.

In closing, I wish, once again, through this forum, to convey to Mr. Mandela our very best wishes and profound prayers for his good health and strength as he embarks on the arduous task ahead. His role remains most crucial and vital to whatever progress will be made in South Africa from here on. We have immense confidence in him to undertake that arduous task with dignity and calmness. We welcome him home.

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Statement by the
Secretary-General of the United Nations

The release of Nelson Mandela has been a source of great satisfaction to the international community and, in particular, to the people of South Africa. Throughout the years of his long imprisonment, he has been an inspiration to us all for his courage and unwavering commitment to the goal of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

The liberation of Nelson Mandela is not an end in itself, but a milestone in the democratic process which must lead to the liberation of the people of South Africa from the system of apartheid.

In this regard, I should like to express my appreciation of the constructive role played by President de Klerk. I strongly hope that he will continue, unflaggingly, in advancing the democratic process which offers the only hope for the restoration of peace and justice in South Africa. This democratic process needs to be helped along by the creation of a climate conducive to negotiations and having, as its objective, the eradication of apartheid and a new democratic constitution for the country.

The United Nations declaration on South Africa, adopted by consensus in December 1989, expresses the strong international wish to provide guidance and support to all who are genuinely engaged in the quest for a new South Africa. Mr. Mandela and his colleagues should now be able to play a crucial role in this process. The remarkable vision and stature of Mr. Mandela carries the assurance of a decisive and constructive influence.

It is now a practical possibility that, working together, the people of South Africa will be able to establish a non-racial democracy with equal rights for all. That has been a primary aim of the United Nations, and its realization is now within reach.

This is, indeed, a time of historic opportunity for all of southern Africa. With wisdom, the immense resources and talents of all its people can now be mobilized to transform the future prospects of the region. In the great challenge that lies ahead, the United Nations has a responsibility and a duty to be of all possible assistance.

Statement by H.E. Mr. Amre Moussa (Egypt) on behalf of the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)

The release of Nelson Mandela is not a trivial event or ephemeral development, but, at the same time, it is not the end of the road for the vast and grave problem that the apartheid régime in South Africa represents for mankind.

As we gather today to celebrate this event, Egypt is certain that today's meeting is but a reaffirmation of our determination and the determination of the international community, which we represent, to continue the struggle until such time as the apartheid régime in South Africa is finally eliminated and a democratic state is proclaimed on the basis of majority rule and the equality of all citizens without distinction as to colour, race or religion.

It is incumbent on me, as the representative of Egypt, which holds the chairmanship of OAU, in addition to its position as an integral part of Africa and its constant historic participation in Africa's struggle, whether against colonialism, hegemony and racism or against backwardness and external economic pressures, to draw attention to the following points:

1. The world is actually entering a new phase of international relations and one that shows that the time has come for the ideologies of the past, which had made it possible for policies of polarization, colonization, hegemony, aggressive practices, occupation and racism to subsist and flourish, to disappear from the contemporary lexicon and to be replaced by policies of openness, democracy and co-operation and the mechanisms of dialogue and negotiation. Only thus can just solutions be found that are based on the full and sincere implementation of the principles of the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. The African continent is going through a historic period when hopes abound for a future in which the banners of independence will be raised in Namibia and the winds of change will blow in South Africa. These hopes must not, however, distract us from the true state of affairs. Racism continues to be the official policy of South Africa. Accordingly, any measure short of the complete abolition of this policy will be insufficient to prevent the South African régime from reaping an undeserved reward. How should a régime based on racism and discrimination between the citizens of a single country deserve a reward?

3. The release of Nelson Mandela and his return to the struggle are in themselves an event that calls for celebration. In spite of the other factors that I have enumerated, I must, on behalf of the Egyptian Government, declare our happiness at this step, which we welcome, and offer our congratulations to the great African freedom fighter. We also salute all the efforts made to this end and are honoured that Egyptian diplomacy played a part in them.

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Statement by Mr. Patrick Lekota,
United Democratic Front (UDF), South Africa

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We were inspired last year when the United Nations added its support to the demands that we put forward in the Harare Declaration in order to create in our country an atmosphere conducive to the search for a political solution to the problems of South Africa. Although Comrade Mandela has been released, we must make plans that while we rejoice, we do not regard his release as the end. It is inferred to the beginning of a major task both for us in South Africa and for the international community. There have been ovations showered on de Klerk and his régime, particularly for the release of Nelson Mandela. Our view is that those who really deserve those ovations are the masses of our people who have died and served prison terms for his release. It is really our people and the friends of the liberation struggle at home, the international community and committees such as the Special Committee against Apartheid, which deserve to be congratulated for having preached ultimately the collisions of a Government that has been absolutely stubborn and obstinate and unprepared to respond sensibly to the demands for a democratic Government in our country.

It is for that reason that the Government released Nelson Mandela; not out of its own good will, but out of the pressure of the international community. We therefore appeal to our friends to maintain the pressure on the Government to fulfil the remaining conditions that will create the necessary atmosphere in which a political solution can be found to the problems of our country. Political prisoners must still be freed and they run into thousands. Our comrades who were exiled by the unacceptable policies of apartheid must be allowed to come home. They must be granted immunity from prosecution. We cannot conceive of a process of negotiations in South Africa without the participation of Oliver Tambo, without the participation of Alfred N'zo and so many of the fighters of our country who remain outside their country.

Even the South African Government today concedes that apartheid is wrong and has always been wrong. There exists then no cause why it should continue to exert punishment out of men and women who have given so much of their lives to oppose apartheid. There exists no reason why the Government cannot allow South Africans who oppose apartheid to return to their motherland. We will ask the international community to support us in pressuring the Government some more so that the state of emergency is lifted in our country. It must be lifted because without that there can be no free political participation or political activity inside South Africa.

Something also has to be done about section 28 of the Internal Security Act and section 29 of that Act because whilst those clauses hang upon those who oppose apartheid, there is a real danger that at any given moment those who oppose apartheid will be locked up in prisons. We will ask the international community to support us on that front. It is important that pressure should be kept on the South African Government, not only so that it goes to the conference table, but that it be kept at the conference table in order to produce together with the liberation movements a democratic

constitution for the country. The South African Government has refused to go to that conference table since before 1910, because they refused us participation in the so-called national convention in 1908 to 1909. They will not go there on their own. History has shown that. They must be pressured to go to that table. Those who are beginning to express the hope of the intention to relax the sanctions, for instance, make the serious error of assuming that sometime, at the beginning of 1990, de Klerk woke up with a golden heart towards the black people of South Africa. That is not our understanding. It was pressure that put him there, and that pressure should be kept in place if he is to make further steps towards democratization of the country.

We propose that when the conditions have been fulfilled, then the Government should meet the premium liberation movements of our country and decide on the modalities of how to begin to work towards the drafting of a democratic constitution. Criteria may be worked out as to how people would be qualified to participate in such a constituent assembly or whatever. It will mean that the Government must be pushed to meet with the liberation movements but we will not, in the movements, meet the Government unless the necessary conditions are fulfilled. Beyond a doubt, the product of what takes place in a possible constituent assembly can then lay the foundations for a new government to come to power. It is necessary that, before I finish here, I should mention that we at home are satisfied that with or without de Klerk, the National Party is incapable of dismantling apartheid as such. The simple reason is that the National Party owes its very existence to apartheid.

To say that the National Party should dismantle apartheid is as good as to say that it must commit suicide. It was the National Party and the founder of the National Party who introduced the 1930 Land Act and the 1936 Land and Trust Act. Those Acts make it impossible for Africans to own land on 87 per cent of the surface of South Africa. When President de Klerk spoke in Parliament on 2 February, we had no commitment from him that he would get rid of the 1930 and the 1936 Land Act and whilst those remain, we have no access to land. In our country, we remain unable as black people to own homes, even when we have money, where we would like to own those homes. Because of the statute books of the country, the group areas remain and the Government has made clear under the leadership of de Klerk that it is not prepared to dismantle the Group Areas Act.

Today, education remains discriminatory in our country because in 1953, the Government introduced the system of bantu education, which, in the words of Verwoerd, was intended to teach Africans to see the green pastures but never to walk on them. We continue to be fed that kind of education, which can only at best make out of the vast majority of our people only menial workers who may sweep the floors and offices or who may stand at the gates as security guards with no skills. We insist that as long as education remains discriminatory, apartheid is alive in our country and it is issues such as those that make the argument that has been advanced by so many who support that Government that the presence of transnational corporations in South Africa benefits black people. The simple reason is that without the necessary training, we are unable to take advantage of whatever meaningful jobs are created by those companies in the country. Therefore, the better-trained

white South Africans benefit from them and we insist that the Group Areas Act, the Population Registration Act and the dismantling of the homeland system can only be done by a new Government that will be born out of a negotiating process. For those reasons, therefore, you will appreciate that the task of changing the Government is very urgent. On our part, and on the part of the liberation movement, we make a stern commitment that on the dawn of a new day, we will set in our country a government that will count your support and your effort on our behalf with pride.

Statement by H.E. Mr. Blaise Rabetafika (Madagascar), Chairmen of the Group of African States at the United Nations

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The decisions taken by South Africa would never have aroused such interest had it not been for Nelson Mandela, that eminent man who has been presented sometimes as a myth and sometimes as a symbol. He became a myth by force of circumstances, because, on the one hand, the younger generations knew him only as a vague portrait, blurred by time and systematic disinformation, and, on the other, conservative and reactionary circles sought to perpetuate that distortion in order to convince themselves that nothing would ever come of the struggle of the oppressed black majority. It is not therefore surprising that at one time we were regarded as unrepentant dreamers when we demanded the release of Nelson Mandela.

Fortunately, times have changed. As apartheid began to lose its relevance and the forced support of certain ideologies, and as the liberation and protest movements gained credibility and became more effective, Nelson Mandela became a symbol - a symbol of the dignity of black honour, a symbol of constancy in the face of trials and easy temptations, a symbol of the many-faceted struggle against apartheid, a symbol of the aspirations of black South Africans for recognition of their political, economic, social and cultural rights.

But, above all, Nelson Mandela embodies the hope of the current generation in South Africa to come into their inheritance and live in a just, democratic and non-racial society. To realize that hope, much remains to be done. The state of emergency can certainly no longer be justified and political prisoners and those detained for alleged crimes under common law must be released. The Land Act, on which the Group Areas Act was based, the Population Registration Act and the laws on bantu education, the bantustans and the tricameral parliamentary system must be repealed. Those laws, and so many others, were the pillars of apartheid of yesterday and today. If their repeal is to be the subject of negotiations, it is important that there should be no question of only partial reforms merely to safeguard the rights of a minority. At this stage, it is our hope that the negotiations will take place according to the framework provided by the Harare Declaration, which was endorsed by the General Assembly at its sixteenth special session.

It is impossible to predict with any certainty how long the negotiations will last. There has been talk of 10 years, 5 years, or even less. Optimism

must therefore be tempered and we continue to believe that diplomatic, economic and political pressure must be maintained until the advent of a new South Africa that is in keeping with the aspirations of its people as a whole, not divided according to outdated criteria. This pressure, these sanctions, we have achieved by means of a fierce struggle, and political realism dictates that, having come so close to attaining our objectives, we should not play into the hands of diversionists and those who call for leniency towards South Africa.

We are modest in victory, which remains incomplete, but determined that the struggle should continue.

Statement by H.E. Mr. Chinmaya Rajaminath Gharekhan (India), Chairman of the Group of Asian States at the United Nations

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Nelson Mandela has come to symbolize the struggle of the South African people against injustice and oppression. He personifies their courage and determination. Indeed, as the Prime Minister of India, Mr. V. P. Singh, noted in his statement on the occasion of his release, "Mandela is the greatest symbol today of the human spirit, which refuses to surrender to oppression". He has been fighting for liberty, justice and equality for his people; in short, for the total eradication of apartheid. Many a time did Pretoria offer to release him conditionally. But he spurned all such offers, sacrificing his freedom for the greater good of his people. He has cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in South Africa, in which all persons would live together in harmony and enjoy equal opportunities in all spheres. It was an ideal that, he said, he hoped to live for and to achieve; and, if need be, an ideal for which he was prepared to die.

We welcome and rejoice at the release of Nelson Mandela, and the other measures recently announced by the South African Government. We trust that South Africa will not slacken its efforts towards creating the climate necessary to dismantle its unjust structures and secure for itself the benefits of a democratic non-racial society. Regrettably, the state of emergency continues to be in force. Several political prisoners have yet to be released and the legislation embodying the policies of apartheid, such as the Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act and the Land Acts incorporating the bantustan homeland policy, still remain in force. In short, a lot more remains to be done. It would therefore be premature to concede that genuine and definitive change in apartheid has already taken place. Our goal has to be the complete eradication of apartheid.

We hope that the South African Government will follow up on the steps taken so far and will fulfil the remaining preconditions towards the creation of a climate conducive to genuine and serious negotiations with the true representatives of the people of South Africa. We hope that such negotiations will begin soon with the objectives of the complete elimination of the apartheid system and the establishment of majority rule on the basis of universal suffrage exercised through the system of one-person one-vote, under

a common voters' roll, in a united and non-fragmented South Africa, within a specified timeframe.

In conclusion, I should like to convey the greetings of all the peoples of Asia to Nelson Mandela. Our unwavering commitment against apartheid, and its support for all calls for Nelson Mandela's release, stand vindicated by his emergence into freedom. Asia is with him in his quest for freedom, equality and the legitimate rights of his people. Let us hope that his release will spur the process of peaceful transition to a new, democratic, non-racial South Africa, where all communities will be able to live in harmony and in peace and together work for the good of their country.

Statement by H.E. Mr. Stanislaw Pawlak (Poland), Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States at the United Nations

On behalf of the Group of Eastern European States at the United Nations I would like to express sincere satisfaction and joy of my Group over the release of the longest-serving prisoner of the system of apartheid, Mr. Nelson Mandela. Over the long years, against all odds, Mr. Nelson Mandela stood as a towering figure in the struggle of the black population of South Africa against the vicious system of apartheid. Through his courage and strength of conviction, in spite of prison isolation, he was a constant source of hope for democratic change for his long suffering black compatriots of South Africa. One is struck that after long years of incarceration he has so much to give to his people and he seems to have no rancour for his opponents. The winds of change have reached South Africa. South Africa of today does not resemble the country that closed prison gates behind Mr. Nelson Mandela 27 years ago.

As he stated in his address to the people on the day of his unconditioned release on 11 February 1990, "today the majority of South Africans, black and white, recognize that apartheid has no future". It is being crashed by the mass campaign of defiance and other actions by the oppressed people of South Africa. But it should be also noted that the South African Government, as expressed by policy statements of President de Klerk, shows some signs of realism as evidenced by its decision to lift bans on the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and other opposition organizations releasing some political prisoners.

However welcome are those measures, they are just the first step in a process of dismantling apartheid and building of a non-racial and democratic society in South Africa. Of crucial importance in bringing closer this goal was the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences for Southern Africa, unanimously adopted by the General Assembly at its sixteenth special session, which urged a process of peaceful negotiations leading to a new constitutional order determined by the people of South Africa and based on the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Group of Eastern European States fully supports the goals and objectives contained in the Declaration and holds the view that the international community should not relent its efforts until the goal of South Africa becoming a united, non-racial and democratic state is achieved. This

goal would also be a life-time achievement of the leader of the majority of the South African population, Mr. Nelson Mandela.

Statement by H.E. Dr. Marjorie Thorpe (Trinidad and Tobago), Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States at the United Nations

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In his address at the Cape Town City Hall on Sunday, 11 February 1990, Mr. Mandela offered his thanks not only to the millions of his compatriots but also to those in every corner of the globe who had campaigned tirelessly for his release.

For several years, the Special Committee against Apartheid made the release of Nelson Mandela one of the principal planks in its struggle against the heinous system of apartheid.

In doing so, the Committee was prompted by the recognition that while Mr. Mandela's imprisonment represented the unjust incarceration of a heroic nationalist, it also symbolized the virtual enslavement of a people on the dubious grounds of racial superiority.

Today, Nelson Mandela is, in the words of the South African Government, free. But Mr. Mandela himself has declared the so-called freedom to be compromised by two factors. First, many other political prisoners and detainees remain in prison, and this despite the insistent demands of the international community that they too be released immediately and unconditionally. Secondly, while Mr. Mandela has been released from the narrow confines of his prison farm, he remains in the larger prison of a society which continues to deny him, and millions of his fellow South Africans, such basic freedoms as the right to vote or to choose where they might live.

Certainly, the release of Nelson Mandela may be interpreted as a signal that Pretoria is serious about dismantling apartheid. But much still remains to be done. The régime must be challenged to lift the state of emergency, to withdraw all troops from the townships; to dismantle the tricameral parliamentary system; and to repeal the Population Registration Act, the Internal Security Act, the Group Areas Act and all other pillars of apartheid.

The Latin American and Caribbean Group joins the rest of the international community in celebrating the triumphant release of Mr. Nelson Mandela. We applaud, too, his courage and unswerving commitment to the principles of freedom, justice and equality, principles which continued to govern his actions even while he was in prison. And we urge that these years of dedicated struggle be justly rewarded by the most appropriate tribute the international community can pay to this outstanding son of Africa.

Mr. Mandela has urged that sanctions against racist South Africa which played such a critical role in securing his own eventual release be maintained

until South Africa is well on the way the way to a free, non-racial, united and democratic society. We owe it to him, and to all those of many races who have joined in the struggle over the years, to heed this plea.

Statement by H.E. Mr. Fernando José Reino (Portugal), Chairman of the Group of Western European and Other States at the United Nations

It is my privilege to speak on this occasion on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States. Permit me to express our profound joy with the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela after 27 years of imprisonment.

His courage and determination during the long years in prison has remained the worldwide recognized symbol of freedom for those struggling for the eradication of apartheid.

We sincerely hope that his release and the steps announced by President de Klerk, on 2 February 1990, will help to create the necessary climate for negotiations. These negotiations must be aimed at the total abolition of apartheid by peaceful means and the establishment of a new, democratic, united and non-racial South Africa.

Statement by Mr. Tebogo Mafole, representative of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC)

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The release of Nelson Mandela, admittedly one of the most celebrated political prisoners in the world, must stand out as not only the mere act of the opening of prison doors for one man, but seen in its proper political context, it most certainly ushers in a new dawn for all the people of our country and, therefore, for the peoples of the entire southern African region.

It is therefore only proper and fitting that the United Nations should seek today to mark this occasion. On behalf of ANC, its leadership and cadres, and indeed on behalf of Nelson Mandela and his family, it is a great honour and privilege for me to register our deep felt appreciation to the United Nations, its various bodies and organs for the relentless campaign that has been waged over the years for the release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners in South Africa. I would like to single out the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, the Centre against Apartheid and all those in the United Nations system who have embraced the noble cause of the people of South Africa as their very own.

It cannot be gainsaid that the event that has occasioned this meeting is a direct result of the relentless struggle that has been waged at a great price by the people of South Africa, as well as by the tireless efforts that have been exerted by the international community, and no less, by the United Nations. For this reason, the peoples of the world and the United Nations are entitled to be jubilant over the victory that they have scored in the release

of Nelson Mandela.

For the first time in 27 years, Nelson Mandela is able to rejoin his wife and children, who over the many lonely years have themselves not only proved impervious to brutal racist repression, but have in their own right joined the front ranks along with their compatriots in the struggle towards the total eradication of apartheid. Indeed, the name of Winnie Mandela has over the years ceased to be solely associated with the imprisoned Nelson Mandela, but has in itself come to symbolize and epitomize great courage and determination.

For the first time in 27 years, Nelson Mandela is able to rejoin his colleagues with whom he has shared decades of trials and tribulations, as they sought to rid the world of the most viscious monster that has ever stalked the African continent -- the apartheid tyranny.

After 27 years of concerted effort by his captors to obliterate his memory from the South African body politic, Nelson Mandela emerges from captivity not only larger than life, but in a real sense as his erstwhile gaolers' hope for the end of the crisis currently gripping our country and the creation of a new order in South Africa.

Nelson Mandela has left Victor Verster Prison, but alas he has exchanged that prison for a larger prison that is South Africa. The apartheid régime, against which the people of South Africa have for decades fought so resiliently, even to the extent of paying the supreme sacrifice, and against which the peoples of conscience throughout the world have invested so much energy, is unfortunately very much in place in South Africa. The deprivations suffered by the majority of the people of South Africa in the land of plenty still persists; South African prisons are still bursting at the seams with numerous patriots whose only crime has been that they dared to aspire for justice in the country of their birth; the shooting down of South Africa's sons and daughters in Soweto and other townships is still the order of the day. The distinguished members of this gathering will no doubt have noticed that even as the people in Cape Town were rejoicing at the release of Nelson Mandela, precious lives were lost as the South African police, with ruthless abandon, opened fire at the crowds.

In spite of the foregoing observations, however, the events that are unfolding in South Africa, and in particular, the steps undertaken by President de Klerk, have been in our view correctly charactized as representing hope for the resolution of the conflict in our country. It will be recalled that the United Nations General Assembly, at its special session on apartheid and its destructive consequences in southern Africa, adopted a declaration which outlined in no uncertain terms the responsibilities of the apartheid régime towards the creation of a climate conducive to negotiations. We dare say that this historic declaration adopted by consensus contributed in no small measure to the steps undertaken by President de Klerk. It has been stated, though, that such measures, however bold, cannot be seen as representing an adequate response to the demands of the international community as reflected in the United Nations declaration.

A cursory glance at the measures announced by President de Klerk, for instance reveal that:

- Whilst ANC and other political organizations are ostensibly unbanned, the régime has stated that only those exiles that have not committed violent crimes would receive safe conduct into South Africa;

- Detention without trial, we are told by the régime, will not be practiced for periods exceeding six months. In practice, however, what this means is that any person can be detained without trial for six months, be released and immediately be re-detained for another six-month period;

- Restrictions on the media are said to have been lifted and yet television cameras are still barred from focussing on what is generally considered as unrest situations; and

- The state of emergency is still in place.

Against this background therefore we have to submit that the apartheid régime, if it is as serious about negotiations as its spokespersons would have us believe, certainly has the obligation to address, in a more satisfactory manner, the concerns of the majority of the people of South Africa and of the world, concerns which are embodied in the Harare Declaration as well as in the declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It is only upon the satisfaction of these demands that a climate conducive to negotiations can be created in South Africa. And it is only in circumstances of genuine negotiations that a new democratic South Africa can emerge from the ruins of apartheid.

...

Whilst acknowledging the expressions of jubilations at not only the unbanning of ANC and the release of one of its foremost leaders, we must, however, caution against a certain sense of euphoria which could lead to complacency. It is a matter of great concern to us that certain powerful voices are emerging, calling for relaxation of sanctions against the apartheid régime as a reward for its undoubtedly positive, albeit insufficient measures. We regret to say that such suggestions rather than facilitate the process towards negotiations, will inevitably prove counterproductive. The contemporary history of our region, and in particular the history of South Africa testifies to the fact that the only language that the apartheid régime understands is the language of pressure. Today the people of Namibia are poised for their hard earned independence. It is an indisputable fact that to a large measure the pressures brought to bear on the régime were responsible for bringing it to a negotiating table, a fact which facilitated the process of Namibia's independence.

To paraphrase Nelson Mandela himself, the lifting of sanctions against Pretoria at this stage would abort the process towards democratic change in South Africa.

For us therefore, the message is crystal clear -- the people of South Africa are called upon to continue with their struggle in an effort to bring about the change that they have cherished over the years. In this regard, the people of the world, who by resolution of the General Assembly decried

apartheid as a crime against humanity, are still faced with the obligation towards the elimination of this scourge. Sanctions imposed by the international community against the apartheid régime remain the most effective and peaceful weapon for its elimination. They therefore must not only be maintained, but must be intensified. Only in this way can we guarantee that the Pretoria régime will be locked into a path leading towards negotiations. ANC for its part, consistent with the spirit and letter of the Harare Declaration, and the declaration adopted at the special session of the United Nations General Assembly, reiterates its unswerving commmitment to the pursuit of a negotiated settltement in South Africa. But it must be stated here that such a commitment should not be misconstrued as the abandoning of struggle. For, to paraphrase Nelson Mandela once more, the people of South Africa have cherished the ideal of freedom in hope of realizing it. But it is an ideal for which they are prepared to die.

Statement by Mr. Count Peterson,
representative of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC)

...

PAC welcomes the release of comrade Nelson Mandela, who, with other political prisoners, has languished in the racist gaols for many years. Comrade Zephania Mothopeng, the President of PAC, on his release from prison in November 1988, demanded the unconditional release of Jeff Masemola and Nelson Mandela, stating, I quote: "They are not supposed to be in prison anyway. They are held there illegally."

While we rejoice that comrade Mandela is now relatively a free person, PAC has no praise for F. W. de Klerk for releasing Mandela and other political prisoners, as he is not doing the dispossessed and oppressed African majority any favour. Even outside Robben Island, Pollsmoor, Victor Verster and other prisons, as already stated by other distinguished speakers here, the oppressed majority lives in a wider prison, the racist Republic of South Africa. As a freedom fighter, I do not make it a habit to speak about myself, but this morning I feel proud to introduce a personal note. I am certain that I am one of the few individuals in this chamber who for many years worked closely with Nelson Mandela. In the 1950s, we worked together during the Defiance Campaign. When I was elected national organizer of the ANC Youth League, I used to go to Nelson Mandela for advice. He was a generous, kind, articulate man, a teacher. He had wisdom, leadership. And during those days as national organizer of the ANC Youth League, I and some of my colleagues spent many weekends sleeping on the sofa of his living room. In fact, I feel ashamed to say that I still have in my possession two books, one political and one a law book, that he gave to me which I have never returned. I want to believe that the modest contribution I have made in the last three decades in our struggle for liberation and self-determination is because I was once a protegé of Mr. Nelson Mandela. Coming back to the political aspect, like all other political prisoners, Mr. Nelson Mandela is released into a vacuum. Unlike political prisoners in other parts of the world, like Gandhi, Nehru, Nkrumah, Kenyatta or Mugabe, all these men were released in order to take over government. But Comrade Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners come

back to live in the ghetto of Soweto and other parts of racist South Africa. He has come back to the same environment governed by apartheid colonialism laws. There is nothing that is new except that today there are more draconian laws than when they went to prison.

The Reverend Jesse Jackson, who met Nelson Mandela yesterday, is quoted in this morning's paper as saying, I quote, "There is a misnomer around the world that Mr. Mandela is free. That is not true. Mandela is out of gaol, he is not free. He is not free to live where he chooses. He is not free to send his children to the school of their choice. He is not free to buy land in 87 per cent of his country. He is not free to vote and run for office. And thus the political pillars of apartheid must be removed in order to create a framework and a timetable for democratic reform". Jackson continues, "We must not lower the standards of democracy or expectations for democracy in South Africa any more than we have in Europe or anywhere else".

In conclusion, PAC calls upon the international community not to relax the pressures that have compelled the racist régime to release comrade Mandela and other political prisoners. As of now, there is no change in the apartheid system. All the political pillars of apartheid are still in place and intact. The international community must continue to isolate the racist régime culturally, economically and otherwise until a non-racial democratic society is established on the basis of the universal principle of one person-one vote in a single non-racial parliament.

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